

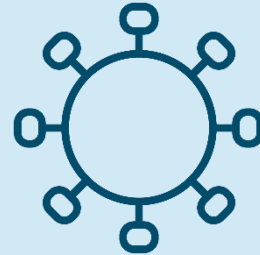
# Quarterly report

October–December 2023

Heard from **492** people  
about their views and  
experiences of  
health and care



Produced a short information  
film on Long Covid



Had a stall at the Carers'  
Roadshow event in the Winter  
Gardens



Shared the experiences of the  
public and patients at a South  
Yorkshire event on dentistry



Published 2 blogs and 7  
information and advice  
articles on our website



Published 2 SpeakUp reports;  
taxi drivers' experience of  
health, and accessing GPs for  
mental health support



# 1. Introduction

Moving into the second half of this year, we were able to complete our project work on palliative and end of life care – in total we heard from 282 people about their experiences. 62 of these were from in depth conversations held one to one, or in small groups; these discussions gave us rich insights into the way in which people had experienced services and support while receiving end of life care either for themselves, or as a carer. The findings will be published in a report early in the next quarter, and have already been shared with key stakeholders in draft form, in order to help shape the development of the South Yorkshire Strategy on palliative and end of life care.

Our information and advice service continues to grow – we are hearing from increasing numbers of people through this route (166 in quarter 3, compared to 113 in quarter 1). The information offer on our website has also been developed significantly since the beginning of the year. Alongside that we have been through a process to upgrade the website, and improve its accessibility for people using screen readers and translation tools. Although the number of visitors to our site is similar to quarter 2, overall we have seen a steady increase over the last year. If we compare visitors with October–December 22, there has been a 48.5% increase.

One of the topics we continue to hear about through our information and advice service is dentistry – people are struggling to find affordable dental care, with access to NHS appointments still very limited for those who don't have a regular dentist. This quarter we were able to work with the other Healthwatch in South Yorkshire, to combine feedback on dental services across the region, and present it at a dental stakeholder event. This event, organised by the South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board, was an important opportunity to describe the local challenges around dentistry, and bring people together to consider the ways in which things could be improved.

Finally, we were pleased to be able to publish two SpeakUp grant reports this quarter – the final grant from last year's round of funding, and the first from this year's. We also followed up on a previous report done by Sheffield Foyer on young people's experience of accessing sexual health services, by holding a roundtable discussion with key stakeholders. This work has been able to contribute to the current refresh of the commissioning for sexual health services, and was shared with councillors on the health scrutiny committee to help inform their discussion on this topic.

## 2. Enquiries, Information and Advice

Members of the public can tell us about their experiences of health and social care services in the Sheffield region so that we can then share their views and opinions with decision-makers. We also offer specific information and advice about their care. Giving information about health and social care services is one of our statutory duties.

Enquiries we receive may include finding out about people's rights to treatment, what services may be available to them, or how to raise a concern about a negative experience they have had. We help people to find the right information as well as signposting them to further support if needed. Sometimes we can help people with their question immediately, whilst other situations may be more complex and may involve supporting the individual for a longer period of time.

Between October and December 2023, we received 166 pieces of individual feedback through our enquiry line relating to people's experiences of health and social care services – a rise compared to the previous quarter. This quarter, we heard mixed reviews about GP online facilities. Where people shared less positive stories, access was a key issue. Some did not use online systems so were unable to fill in triage forms, book appointments or request repeat prescriptions. Others were impressed with online facilities and found being able to raise queries this way with their surgery was a lot easier than before.

We continued to hear from those living in certain parts of the city who have limited, infrequent, and unreliable public transport services which is impacting their access to hospital services. Issues with hospital parking was also raised – people told us they would welcome more disabled parking bays across sites. Others raised concerns about the level of fuel emissions being produced by vehicles when trying to find an available parking spot.

We heard about issues with prescriptions which was largely due to medication being out of stock. Some stated pharmacy staff did not often provide them with any guidance or options when in this situation which would have been helpful for them.

## Where have we signposted people this quarter?



## Case Studies

### Difficulty accessing special dental care services

\* Lauren got in touch with us as she wanted advice about accessing specialist dental services for her husband Ryan. Ryan was a wheelchair user and the environment at his regular dentist was often too noisy which made him feel uncomfortable and anxious. Lauren raised the issue with Ryan's GP, but they did not know of any services they could refer him to. Lauren called us and explained the situation. We provided contact details and information about the special care clinics in Sheffield and explained a referral to the service could be made by any healthcare professional. Lauren was grateful for the information and planned to seek a referral for Ryan as soon as possible.

### Barriers to accessing an urgent GP appointment

\* Suki called us as she was concerned about her health but had not been able to access an urgent GP appointment. Suki had called her surgery but was informed she could no longer book an appointment by phone and was advised to fill in a triage form online. Suki explained she wasn't able to use online facilities and could not fill the form, but wasn't offered any other support. We contacted the practice and spoke with a member of staff. They phoned Suki after our call and arranged an urgent GP appointment for her. They also added a note to the system to ensure Suki received support in the future.

\*names have been changed

### 3. Website

This quarter we updated our website software; these changes aim to meet the W3C (World Wide Web Consortium) AA standards for accessibility, including page layouts which are easier for people using screen readers to access, and an improved language translation tool.

Our website had 2,500 visitors this quarter with 5,200 page views. Our most viewed article was [Paul's blog](#) about trying to access an adult ADHD assessment in Sheffield (read more about this below).

Our most viewed report was our [October-November intelligence briefing](#), sharing what people had been telling us about Sheffield's health and social care services in that period.

#### Blogs

This quarter we published two guest blogs, working with members of the public with lived experience of particular health conditions or services to share their views.

The first of these was written by Brenda, a longtime Healthwatch Sheffield volunteer, for World Diabetes Day. She talked about her own experience of living with diabetes as well as the research and trials she has participated in. You can read it here: [Brenda's blog](#)

The second was written by Paul, a member of the public who is currently waiting for an adult ADHD assessment. He talks about his long journey trying to access diagnosis and support, and the things he's found helpful in the interim. You can read it here: [Paul's blog](#)



#### Information and advice

We are continuing to work on our online offer of information and advice – we have published 7 information articles on our website this quarter, on topics ranging from Seasonal Affective Disorder, to virtual wards, and the menopause.

You can browse them here: [Information and Advice Articles](#)

## 4. CQC / Sharing intelligence

**Healthwatch England:** We have been sharing data with Healthwatch England monthly, via their new digital platform. This connection with Healthwatch England helps us influence policy at a national level. This quarter, some of what the public shared with us was quoted in the Healthwatch England report [The Public's Perspective – The state of health and social care](#)

**CQC:** We shared feedback about one care home with the CQC.

**What have we been hearing?:** This quarter we have shared 2 roundup reports with statutory partners, commissioners and service providers to highlight the issues that people are talking to us about. These are picked up in different ways, and have become a regular item for discussion at the Health and Wellbeing Board.

### **Intelligence showed with local partners:**

We shared intelligence with **Sheffield Teaching Hospitals** that was used to inform their discussions around what their quality objectives would be next year. We then shared our views on the different options being considered.

We also shared feedback relating to why people don't attend health appointments to inform their work around reducing the number of missed head and neck appointments.

We shared intelligence with **Primary Care Sheffield** about 2 of their GP practices.

## 5. Children and Young people

One of our priorities for 23–25 is children's health; this quarter we started to plan and prepare for this work. As part of that preparation, the staff team did training on working with Care Experienced Children, delivered by Sheffield City Council's Voice and Influence Team.

## 6. Community Partnerships

The Community Partnership programme is a way for us to connect with voluntary sector organisations, working together to raise the voices of the people they support. We now have 12 [community partners](#), who help link us to a range of communities.

We produce regular newsletters for our community partners, but there is no fixed approach for the way the partnership works; we work flexibly to find ways that we can support each other in helping people have their say about health and social care services in Sheffield. Our Community Partners programme has developed since its creation to match the needs of the organisations we work closely with. In our last quarterly report, we shared that we had asked our partners how we could best work with them. One of the requests made was for training, and this quarter our Community Outreach lead developed and promoted a training course 'Having successful Conversations' which will be run next quarter.

## 7. #SpeakUp Grants

### 2022–23 grants

#### CABS

In November we published the final report from the 2022–23 round of SpeakUp grants. CABS (Champions in Achieving Better health in Sheffield) spoke with 66 men working as taxi drivers in the city, mostly from Pakistani backgrounds.

They found that generally, physical and emotional health for this group was felt to be low, and there are a wide range of issues that make it harder for them to improve their health and wellbeing. This includes particular issues accessing statutory healthcare services (related to being self-employed and working long hours), as well as a lack of culturally appropriate support (for instance around healthy eating). They also found barriers to accessing sport and exercise.

You can read their full findings in the report here: [CABS SpeakUp report](#)

#### Sheffield Foyer

In response to Sheffield Foyer's SpeakUp report, focussing on sexual health for homeless young people, we held a roundtable meeting in October 2023 to discuss the findings of the report, what has changed since the report, and identify some practical actions to improve access for this group. The meeting was attended by representatives from Primary Care Sheffield, Sexual Health Sheffield, and Public Health at Sheffield City Council, along with staff from Foyer and Cherrytree, young people's homeless hostels in the city.

After this meeting we wrote a briefing outlining the actions identified, which you can read on the original report page here: [Sheffield Foyer SpeakUp report update](#)

This briefing was also presented at an informal meeting of the Healthier Communities and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee, where councillors were looking at sexual health services in the city.



## 2023–24 grants

### Space to Breathe

The first report from the 2023–24 round of SpeakUp projects was published in November.

Space to Breathe, in partnership with Chapelgreen Surgery and a Lived Experience team of wellbeing workers, designed a project to help them understand people's experiences of accessing support for their mental health from their GP.

They ran an online survey, held a conversation group, and had an art and activity installation in Chapelgreen Surgery to gather people's views and experiences, as well as their suggestions for improvement.

Their recommendations include a desire for primary care services to be open to trialling new ways of working to improve appointment booking systems, creating new routes to deal with crisis issues, involving patients more in decision making, and improved signposting to other sources of support. The team will work with Chapelgreen Surgery and the rest of the Network North Primary Care Network to trial some of these suggestions, with the hope of replicating this in other areas of the city too.

You can read their full findings in the report here: [Space to Breathe SpeakUp report](#)

### Other grants

Parson Cross Development Forum and Saalik Youth Project have also completed their engagement activities, and their project reports are currently being written. These will be published in the new year.

SAVTE (Sheffield Association for the Voluntary Teaching of English) have held planning meetings with our team to design their project in more detail, and are currently carrying out their work.

## 8. Projects, Involvement and Engagement

### Long Covid

The Long Covid project is still at the second stage of the Long Covid Community Grants Programme – the six community organisations funded at this stage have produced materials and are in the process of agreeing on final versions of these with Healthwatch and the Long Covid Rehabilitation Hub.



The Steering Group have met three times during this quarter, and at the last meeting agreed to develop into a Network – they will hold their first meeting on the 31<sup>st</sup> of January. There was some great feedback about the project at the last meeting, and although there was some sadness at what felt like ‘the end of an era’ – members were also enthusiastic for a new, dynamic space in which to meet and address future work.

The project has produced the first draft of an information video about Long Covid to be used for general purposes. We scripted and had the contents approved by the Long Covid Rehabilitation Hub before commencing filming. We asked for feedback from a variety of stakeholders on the first draft and this was well received, with only minor suggestions for changes which have now gone back to the production company. We are hoping to get approval from NHS comms, to be able to show it in public spaces within the NHS.

There were 6 interviews completed in this quarter; this brings the interviews to a total of 20 altogether. This part of the project has now been completed; next quarter we will start work on a report that will share what we heard in these interviews.



Long Covid Video filming

## Palliative and End of Life Care

This quarter we had more one to one conversations with people about their experiences of palliative and end of life care, to complete our work on this subject. As well as our own staff team doing this work, we recognised that (particularly for this sensitive topic), many people would feel more comfortable speaking with someone that they already had a trusted relationship with. For this reason, we paid two voluntary sector organisations to have group discussions and do one to one interviews on our behalf. These were the [Hadfield Institute](#) (who spoke mainly to people from the Yemeni and other Arab communities) and [SACMHA Health and Social Care](#) (who interviewed people from the African Caribbean Community). These organisations were able to conduct the work in a way that met the cultural and language needs of those taking part.

We extend our thanks to the Hadfield Institute, SACMHA Health and Social Care, and also to the many other community groups and organisations who supported this work. Organisations across the City played a key role by letting us to come and visit, talking to us about this project, connecting us with people, and sharing information on our behalf. Working together in this way means that more people in our city have had their say on this important topic.

In October we presented initial findings from this project at the Citywide group for palliative and end of life care. We will publish the final report next quarter.

### Using voice for influence



Sharing the initial findings on the Palliative and End of Life Care work means that stories and experiences that people shared are already having an impact on how services are thinking about future strategy and delivery.

***“The information is really powerful...and is already guiding our decision making”***

ICB Commissioner

## Out and about – stalls at community events and visits to organisations

### Carers Roadshow

Our team attended the Carers Roadshow which was held in the Winter Gardens in October, where we had a stall and also gave a presentation. We spoke to around 75 people about the work of Healthwatch, and heard their experiences of health and care services. We also shared our information resources and helped a number of individuals with information enquiries.

### Lifestyle Centre – Beighton

Beighton is an area of Sheffield that we do not hear from as often as other areas in the city. We visited the Lifestyle Centre, which is an invaluable resource in Beighton, providing a range of community activities from Zumba, information and advice drop-in sessions, and acting as an outreach site for Burton Street Foundation (a centre for adults with learning disabilities).

Residents in the area said Rotherham Hospital was closer than the hospitals in Sheffield. One person suspected of having a stroke was referred to Rotherham by 111, but there is no bus service; they told us Beighton only has one bus every half an hour. Other concerns were access to local pharmacies. Boots in Crystal Peaks shopping

centre was the most accessible pharmacy but this has now closed, and some patients were finding GPs and pharmacies were unable to process their repeat prescriptions within seven days.

It is still too early to know the impact from what residents have shared with us, but building a sustainable relationship with the community leaders is vital for hearing more from this area of Sheffield.

### **Women's Aid and Waves listening event**

During December 2023, our Community Outreach Lead visited two Women's Aid refuges to hear from survivors of domestic abuse. The purpose was to hear about the experiences of the women in accessing health and care services, as well as the experiences of getting the right care and support for their children.

Emerging themes from the conversations were around accessing specialist mental health services, the expense of over-the-counter medication, dentistry and access to health care as a sole care provider. Follow up interviews with mothers, children and young people are planned for early 2024.

Our staff also went to the Waves Forum listening event, which brought together women who are survivors of violence and abuse, with senior stakeholders and partners to discuss the systemic issues that negatively impact on women's experience and safety. We connected with a charity which helps women and arranged to offer them support around giving the women they work with a stronger voice.

## **9. Reports**

### **What have we been hearing?**

This quarter we have published two of our regular intelligence briefings, outlining the key issues we heard through enquiries and public engagement. Following our change to bi-monthly reports, these are the [August-September briefing](#), and the [October-November briefing](#).

We have also begun publishing actions that are taking place as a result of these briefings. Sheffield Teaching Hospitals share these briefings at meetings, and actions are agreed in response to particular pieces of feedback. Our October-November briefing begins to share some of these, to reflect how the timely sharing of feedback can make smaller but important improvements to services.

Last quarter we reported that we were asking stakeholders for feedback on these briefings, to ensure they were helpful for services looking to use them to make similar improvements. Comments included a desire for some more information about specific cases, and the occasional 'deeper dive' into particular topics that keep coming up over the months.

## 10. Quality Accounts

This quarter the final local NHS Trust published their 2022-23 Quality Account, including the stakeholder response we provided earlier in the year.

You can read the report from Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust on their website here: [2022-23 Quality Account](#)

## 11. Health & Care Public Forum (Sheffield)

This quarter the following topics were discussed:

- **Sheffield Discharge Delivery Model** –The group discussed work taking place to improve people's experiences and outcomes when they are discharged from hospital.
- **Virtual Wards** –Thoughts were shared on the feedback form which is given to patients who have had virtual ward care.
- **Technology to improve health and social care** – Representatives attended from a Leading Sheffield challenge group which was working on a wicked problem as a part of the leadership development course. They asked the Forum for feedback on their ideas about how technology could be used to tackle the root causes of problems facing health and social care. The feedback informed their conclusions and was used in their final presentation.
- **The North East Neighbourhood Plan, 2023 – 28** – Forum members heard about plans to improve the health and quality of life of people living in the north east of Sheffield. Their discussions highlighted the importance of using learning from previous initiatives to make improvements for people living in the area, building trust, and involving grass-root organisations when designing and delivering the work.

### **The Forum supporting Leadership development course [Leading Sheffield](#)**

Some Health & Care Public Forum members had attended the Leading Sheffield representative's focus group prior to their meeting, to talk about what the main issues in health and social care are. Some members also attended a focus group held by another challenge group who asked people aged 50+ what ageing meant to them.

We received great feedback after delivering an interactive patient and public involvement workshop session to Leading Sheffield participants. We liaised with some of the groups around their patient and public involvement activities and spoke at the landing event which we attended alongside some of our Forum members.

## 12. Local decision making

The Health and Care Bill is new legislation which has made changes to the way the NHS is organised – on 1st July 2022 new **Integrated Care Boards (ICBs)** were set up across the country in each sub-region. These boards will work with partnerships of local organisations such as voluntary sector organisations and local authorities, as part of an **Integrated Care System (ICS)**. Sheffield is now part of the **South Yorkshire ICS**.

This is important to the work of Healthwatch because our role is to influence and improve the way services are run. In the new system, some decisions about Sheffield services will now be made at a South Yorkshire level – this means we need to have routes to influence decisions in this new structure.

### **During this quarter we have:**

- Continued to work with other South Yorkshire Healthwatch to promote the importance of public involvement and citizen voice in the new structure
- Continued meeting regularly with Engagement and Involvement leaders at the ICB, to ensure that our work at Healthwatch is connected to work taking place at a South Yorkshire level
- Continued attending the Quality, Performance and Patient Experience sub-committee of the ICB

Healthwatch has a non-voting place on the ICB where we have the opportunity to bring insight from our work, and constructive challenge to the system in our role as a critical friend. As an interim measure, the Healthwatch Sheffield Chief Officer has taken this place while we develop a longer term plan to ensure we can be fully effective in our work with the board.

Locally, our Chair has been attending the **Health and Care Partnership Board** meetings, and has been active in contributing to discussion around the future of how services will work together as Sheffield Place. This also links to the role that we have currently facilitating the Health and Care Public Forum, giving people and patients an opportunity to directly hear about and comment on locally developed plans (see section 11 above).

**We will continue to advocate for the importance of involving people in decision making, wherever those decisions are made.**

## Using voice for influence



This quarter our Chief Officer presented at a South Yorkshire ICB **Dental Stakeholder Event**. On behalf of Healthwatch across South Yorkshire we shared what people have been telling us about how hard it is to get the dental care they need. Bringing patient experience to the conversation in events such as this, helps leaders and decision makers better understand the challenges they are working to address.

## 13. Supporting services to involve people

During this quarter we have worked in partnership with services to help them plan and deliver engagement and involvement work/activities, including:

### Community mental health services

Sheffield Health and Social Care Trust having been working to change the delivery model for community mental health services. This quarter, we supported them by getting feedback from people on drafts of letters to service users. This helped improve the readability of the letters that people received about the changes to their service.

### Supporting other Healthwatch

Last year our Community Outreach Lead was on secondment to a role in Healthwatch England, supporting the development of engagement across the network. This year, she has continued to spend some of her time on this work, through facilitating the **Healthwatch England's Engagement Leads Network** events. These events are held online and attended by engagement, outreach, and volunteer leads from other local Healthwatch across England. The events are a space to share learning, network and broker working relationships with external charities and organisations.

## 14. Volunteers

This quarter volunteers contributed at least **144 hours** of their time to support our work. This includes the ongoing work of our Strategic Advisory Group, and the Health and Care Public Forum (Sheffield).

## Volunteering highlights

In October, Verni (who is a member of our strategic advisory group) helped us deliver a presentation at the carers road show event. Drawing on her lived experience, Verni provided invaluable insights into how Healthwatch collaborates with carers.

She talked about the value of our information and advice service, illustrating how it can support carers navigating healthcare systems. Additionally, Verni described Healthwatch's proactive approach in raising the concerns of carers, offering concrete examples of advocacy efforts and their impact.

## 15. Healthwatch Team

This quarter no staff have left the team. Pam Daniels (VAS Engagement Lead) who worked with us on the palliative and end of life care project has completed that work and is no longer working with us.

## 16. Coming up – What next for Healthwatch Sheffield?

We will publish more of this round of Speak Up Reports

We will complete work on our Long Covid Project

We will publish our report on Palliative and End of Life Care

We will start work to identify which areas of Sheffield will be the focus for our priority 'A neighbourhood view of Health and Care'



## Using Voice for Influence



As well as sharing our intelligence in our written round ups, staff and volunteers regularly raise feedback and share experiences in the meetings they attend. Taking part in meetings helps us stay informed about developments in services, and enables us to promote the importance of listening to, and involving people, in shaping those developments. This quarter, we have attended the following meetings, boards and committees:

- Health and Wellbeing Board
- Lived Experience and Co-production Assurance Group (Sheffield Health and Social Care Trust)
- Integrated Care Board (NHS South Yorkshire)
- Quality, Performance, Patient Involvement and Experience Committee (NHS South Yorkshire)
- Learning Disability Partnership Board
- Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee – Sheffield City Council
- Area Prescribing Group
- Primary Care Commissioning
- Integrated Medicines' Optimisation Committee (IMOC)
- Community Mental Health Team Programme Board
- Primary and Community Mental Health Transformation Programme Board
- VAS weekly network meetings
- Health and Care Strategy meeting – voluntary sector
- Sheffield Health and Care Partnership Board
- South Yorkshire Local Dental Network
- Oral Health Advisory Group (Sheffield)
- Sheffield Teaching Hospitals Quality Report Steering Group
- Patient Engagement and Experience Committee – Sheffield Teaching Hospitals
- Community Development and Inclusion Delivery Group
- Sheffield Transformation and Oversight Committee

**Representatives from other Healthwatch in South Yorkshire also attend a range of meetings on behalf of our region, giving us an opportunity to feed into other areas of work including:**

- South Yorkshire Integrated Care Partnership
- South Yorkshire Mental Health/Crisis care meetings
- South Yorkshire System Quality Group